

The Republicans claim they share Democrats' goal of protecting these 7 million students I have talked about from these interest rate increases. We will see. But they insist we should pay for this proposal with unreasonable cuts to preventive health care services for millions of Americans. This is a program that is so vitally important to the health care delivery system in this country. Senators MIKULSKI, HARKIN, and others have worked very hard to maintain this program. It is so essential. Republicans know their proposal would never pass the Senate—never—and President Obama has said he would veto more cuts to crucial preventive health care. But there is already a compromise on the table. Our legislation closes a loophole that allows the rich to avoid paying taxes they already owe. Our proposal is not a new tax. It would simply stop wealthy Americans from dodging the taxes they are required to pay. If Senate Republicans are truly serious about protecting 7 million students, they will work with us to pass this reasonable proposal.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### NOMINATIONS OF AJIT VARADARAJ PAI AND JESSICA ROSENWORCEL TO BE MEMBERS OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 512 and 513; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

##### FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Ajit Varadaraj Pai, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission for a term of five years from July 1, 2011.

Jessica Rosenworcel, of Connecticut, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission for a term of five years from July 1, 2010.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I rise today to say a few words about the nomination of Ajit Pai to be a member of the Federal Communications Commission. I have supported his nomination and that of his fellow nominee, Jessica Rosenworcel, and am pleased that unrelated matters have finally been resolved and that the Senate has confirmed both nominees.

Ajit is somebody whom many of us have come to know from his years of

public service, whether on the Senate Judiciary Committee, at the Department of Justice, where Ajit worked on both antitrust and legal policy matters, or in the general counsel's office of the FCC. I especially appreciate his important work on the Roberts, Miers, and Alito Supreme Court nominations during the 109th Congress, as well as his careful attention to national security matters while at the Department of Justice.

Ajit is the son of immigrants who came to this country seeking opportunity, as did the ancestors of so many of our fellow Americans. They settled in the small town of Parsons, KS, population of 10,000. During his testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee, Ajit shared his memories of the sense of community and the Midwestern values that he learned in Parsons. He worked hard in school, excelled at both Harvard College and the University of Chicago Law School, and built a career in law and policy. Today, Ajit finds himself being confirmed to this position of honor and receiving a unique opportunity to serve his Nation. I am certain that his parents, having come to this country just 40 years ago, are immensely proud of him.

We should all be grateful that individuals like Ajit choose to serve in these important positions, especially in fields where there are also opportunities in private life. He will be a member of the FCC for more than 4 years. I am grateful for his service and appreciate that he and his wife Janine have agreed to make this sacrifice for the good of our Nation.

I am very disappointed that these nominations have been delayed for so long for nongermane reasons. Good men and women simply will not volunteer to serve if they are arbitrarily forced to spend months in limbo, uncertain as to their future.

As an FCC Commissioner, Ajit will be one of five individuals overseeing an agency with 2,000 employees and a budget of \$350 million. The Commission has broad regulatory authority over the Nation's communications industry. The communications landscape has evolved dramatically, not just during my lifetime but since I entered the Senate in 1995 and even in the past few years. It is sometimes difficult to remember how we functioned before we had the ability to reach most people on cell phones, to access the Internet from computers in any corner of the globe, or to watch videos of our children and grandchildren on mobile devices. Most Americans were raised in a world in which the television offered just a few channels, there was no cable news, and telephones had rotary dials.

Policymakers should be reminded that many of the technologies that we take for granted today will soon be gone, and we do not really know which technologies will become obsolete and in which direction the Nation's innovators and consumers will take us. Congress and the FCC do not make

those decisions, or at least they should not. These decisions should be made by the American people in their capacity as consumers, businessmen, entrepreneurs, investors, and citizens.

Government does not create innovation or make entrepreneurs, and it should not be in the business of picking winners or losers or trying to shape private investment. The government's proper role in communications, as in other sectors of our economy, is to establish clear and stable rules that encourage competition, that give consumers choice and allow markets to thrive, and that keep bureaucratic preferences and politics to a minimum.

Ajit has made clear that he shares this understanding of his role. I think that we can expect good things from him as a member of the Federal Communications Commission.

I congratulate Ajit on this honor and am proud to have supported his nomination.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate resumes legislative session.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. REID. Would the Chair announce the business of the day?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### STOP THE STUDENT LOAN INTEREST RATE HIKE ACT OF 2012—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2343, which the clerk will report by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to S. 2343, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend the reduced interest rate for Federal Direct Stafford Loans, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: We are now on the Stop The Student Loan Interest Rate Hike Act of 2012, is that not correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is on the motion to proceed to that measure.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I can't emphasize strongly enough the importance and the urgency of the legislation before us—the Stop the Student Loan Interest Rate Hike Act of 2012—which the majority leader spoke about. On July 1, unless Congress intervenes, the interest rate on Federal student